

PROGRAMME UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

AZERBAIJAN

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In Brief

Appeal No. 01.77/2004; Programme Update no. 2.

Period covered: 1 June to 31 September, 2004;

Appeal target: CHF 1,309,522 (USD 998,000 or EUR 844,000).

Outstanding needs: None [click here for contributions list](#)

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Operational developments

The Red Crescent estimates, since January 2004, it helped some 18,627 people through its various programmes. Response to the appeal has been good. The appeal coverage is CHF 1,886,481 (144 per cent). Main donors are the governments and the Red Cross Societies of Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands and Korea. Two projects - Azerbaijan Red Crescent community development and youth development - are supported by the Federation's Capacity Building Fund.

Most of the projects received more money than requested; some funds, however, arrived late¹. This combined with delays in implementation during the first half of the year has prompted the Azerbaijan Red Crescent to review its

¹ Humanitarian values and HIV/AIDS programmes received money only in April 2004.

plan of action and reschedule some activities, some to be implemented later during the year, but others, inevitably, were postponed until 2005, including:

- the development of training modules and training of Red Crescent mobile volunteer teams; installation of a radio station in Baku regional centre, and first aid training for local communities under the disaster management programme
- training of volunteers on social care, and fundraising campaigns based on emerging fundraising tools under the branch development project.

Expenditure to date stands at CHF 1,057,882 (58 per cent of the income). It mirrors the progress in implementation and varies from programme to programme (see table below). Additional CHF 425,538 will be spent by the end of 2004 (see relevant sections below for details on outstanding challenges). The remaining balance, around CHF 389,585, will be transferred to support the continuation of activities in 2005.

Programmes/projects	Appeal budget (CHF)	Income (CHF)	Appeal coverage (%)	Expenditure to date (CHF)	Expenditure planned during October-December 2004 (CHF)	Estimated balance at the end of 2004 (CHF)
Health and care programme	196,557	242,723	123	122,364	80,410	94,718
Health promotion and education including volunteer blood donor recruitment	133,358	166,700	125	76,384	54,769	90,316
HIV/AIDS	63,199	76,023	120	45,980	25,641	4,402
Disaster management programme	396,457	648,371	163	367,910	154,081	126,380
Disaster preparedness and response & First Aids	329,089	460,671	140	249,101	116,274	95,296
Mobile Technical Team	67,368	187,700	279	118,809	37,807	31,084
Humanitarian values Programme	69,312	72,514	105	34,631	28,190	9,693
Organisational Development programme	647,194	855,136	132	532,977	162,857	158,794
Programme planning and management skills development	134,686	143,455	107	81,597	30,672	31,186
Branch development	205,177	395,513	193	221,780	91,620	82,113 ²
Community Development	111,170	109,887	99	109,379	0 (project closed)	0
Youth development	196,161	206,281	105	120,221	40,565	45,495
Total	1,309,522	1,886,481	144	1,057,882	425,538	389,585

Health and care

Goal: Health vulnerability of people of Azerbaijan has reduced.

Objective: The Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society is a key humanitarian actor contributing to improving health of vulnerable people with a focus on preventive health.

Health promotion and education: Building on the success of the project in the previously targeted southern camps³, Baku and Sumgait, the Red Crescent has expanded its health promotion and education work to

² The funds provided by the Government of the Netherlands through the Netherlands Red Cross were spent as planned by the end of September 2004. The remaining balance is an additional contribution from the Swedish Red Cross which will cover the gap during September-December 2004.

neighbouring Ganja. It recruited and trained five new volunteers there bringing the total number of Red Crescent volunteer health promoters to **36**.

Shortly after the training, volunteers started working in their communities. They conducted a number of individual and group sessions on family planning, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, healthy nutrition, first aid, personal hygiene and sanitation, as well as the importance of immunization for **4,706** people. After each session, Red Crescent volunteers held a simple test to measure the impact of their education work. Results are encouraging. Before the seminar, only 30 per cent of participants gave correct answers to health related questions, after the Red Crescent training, their number increased to 96 per cent.

A survey was also conducted among internally displaced people (IDPs) living in the southern camps as well as in Sabunchu and Azizbekov districts of Baku to identify what are the most common health problems and develop an adequate response strategy. 220 people were interviewed. Of those, 195 prioritised tuberculosis, 170 mentioned oncological diseases and 151 people advised the most widespread illness in their community is measles. All respondents welcomed Red Crescent health promotion and education efforts because these measures can reduce risk - protect people from diseases and save lives.

In parallel to training, distribution of health promotional materials continued. During the reported period, the Red Crescent distributed 2,000 copies of a booklet on family planning and reproductive health; 2,000 copies of a poster showing a food pyramid, and another 2,000 copies of a booklet on tuberculosis.

Remaining challenges that will be addressed by the end of 2004 include:

- conduct another 220 health promotion and education sessions to train another nine volunteers and 3,714 people.
- distribute and print another 4,000 leaflets and brochures on mental health and breast cancer.

Volunteer blood donor recruitment: 40 Red Crescent volunteers, trained by the Red Crescent earlier this year, conducted a number of seminars for 1,030 students and their professors to create awareness of the importance of voluntary blood donation. A similar session was held in Garadag with the participation of 150 Red Crescent staff and volunteers as well as representatives of local authorities, education and health departments, public association of Karabakh war veterans and district polyclinics.

For the first time in its history, the Azerbaijan Red Crescent marked the World Blood Donor Day⁴. It joined many other Red Cross and Red Crescent societies around the globe to encourage more people to become non-remunerated volunteer blood donors. Celebrations lasted for four days. Red Crescent volunteers and employees of the state blood bank met with 34 regular blood donors to show their appreciation for their contribution and handed over presents. 11 most active Red Crescent volunteers were also awarded. A part of the celebrations was an exhibition of the best drawings of children on the topic '*give blood and save lives*'. Also a video film about volunteer blood donation, developed by the Red Crescent, was shown on a national television for the first time.

Red Crescent printed additional 2,000 copies of a brochure with a headline '*Blood is a source of life and power*' (the first 3,000 copies of the brochure were printed during January-May 2004; see programme update no 1 for details) as well as 3,000 copies of a poster '*Give blood and save life*'. Red Crescent volunteers distributed them to pedestrians near metro stations in Baku on the World Blood Donor Day and during their educational sessions. The project also supported the production of 200 t-shirts and caps with the same message '*give blood and save lives*' for its volunteers.

The promotional efforts of the Red Crescent have resulted in the recruitment of 24 volunteer blood donors over the last four months. The low number was expected during summer, a period of holidays and extremely hot weather (doctors do not recommend giving blood during summer time, because hot temperatures cause dilatation of blood vessels, which can provoke bleeding).

³ The southern camps were established in 1993 to shelter people fleeing the destruction caused by a military conflict with Armenia over Nagorno Karabakh. In 2003, the Government has started the resettlement of these people to more durable accommodations. The current population of the camps is 15,028 people (source: Government of Azerbaijan).

⁴ The World Blood Donor Day is celebrated on 14 June. It is a collaborative activity between the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the World Health Organisation, the International Federation of Blood Donor Organisations and the International Society of Blood Transfusion, with support from the Association of Donor Recruitment Professionals and many other groups.

National society work has been appreciated by its partners, State Blood Bank and Republic Scientific-Research Institute of Haematology and Transfusion. With the later, the Red Crescent signed a memorandum of understanding to extend the cooperation beyond 2004 for another two years. Red Crescent role remains the same - to recruit volunteer non-remunerated blood donors through awareness campaigns and community mobilisation. By the end of 2004, the national society is planning to conduct more educational seminars and recruit more non-remunerated volunteer blood donors.

HIV/AIDS: The Azerbaijan Red Crescent is part of a global effort to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS. It is one of the key players in the country promoting education on the transmission and prevention of the illness through a network of trained volunteers. The focus is on young people, who are the most vulnerable.

During the reported period, the Red Crescent trained 66 new volunteers in Ismayili, Dashkasan and Nakhchivan. This brings the total number of Red Crescent volunteers trained on HIV/AIDS to **228**. Shortly after the training, volunteers, equipped with a manual '*from peer to peer*' developed by the national society, have started working with their communities. They conducted a number of seminars on the human immune system, the affects of HIV on human organism and the ways of its transmission and prevention to 3,420 schoolchildren and students across the country. Volunteers worked also with children of 14-18 years old in Lankaran orphanage and teenagers in IDP camps. In tandem, two volunteers from the Surakhani branch continued to talk about HIV/AIDS and reproductive health with sex workers (304 during the reported period), who undergo treatment in a skin-venereal hospital in Ramani. The total number of people reached by the Red Crescent this year is 5,089; 2,489 people more of planned. The original number to reach was 2,600 by the end of 2004. Volunteers worked hard organising sessions four times a month in every region instead of planned two.

In addition to training, Red Crescent volunteers have campaigned to attract public attention towards the increasing problem of HIV/AIDS. Their actions included a march in the streets of the main towns with a slogan '*youth against HIV/AIDS*'. In Mingechavir, Sabirabad, Lankaran, Sumgait, Ganja and Baku volunteers hold a drawing competition and a quiz on HIV/AIDS among young people. Red Crescent distributed hundreds of condoms and promotional materials, developed by the national society including a booklet '*HIV/AIDS concerns all of us*' and '*youth against AIDS*'. The national society also shot a video clip '*protect yourself*'. The clip delivers basic but essential messages on HIV/AIDS prevention measures. It was shown in all regions to youth who participated in the Red Crescent organised drawing competitions and quizzes as well as peer education seminars. Similar campaigns are planned in October and December 2004. Additionally, by the end of this year, the Red Crescent is planning to:

- produce 3,000 t-shirts and caps, 700 calendars and 500 posters with messages on HIV/AIDS, plus 30 video tapes with the Red Crescent film '*protect yourself*'.
- train 30 volunteers from Baku, Sumgayit and Mingachevir as peer educators on HIV/AIDS.

Disaster Management

Goal: Vulnerability of the population of Azerbaijan to disasters has reduced.

Objective: The Azerbaijan Red Crescent is a key humanitarian actor contributing to strengthening coping mechanisms of vulnerable communities and providing effective support to victims of disasters.

Disaster preparedness and response: The Red Crescent has translated from English into Azeri language the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)⁵ as well as the Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent in disaster relief. The documents will be used during the training the national society is planning to hold for its mobile volunteer teams⁶ in October 2004 to familiarise them with the Movement standards for disaster response.

⁵ The Code of Conduct was developed and agreed upon by eight of the world's largest disaster response agencies in the summer of 1994 and represents a huge leap forward in setting standards for disaster response. It is being used by the International Federation to monitor its own standards of relief delivery and to encourage other agencies to set similar standards. To read more on code of conduct <<http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/conduct/>>

⁶ the Red Crescent has a mobile volunteer team of 12 to 17 members in each region.

The Red Crescent has negotiated with a local company to use a warehouse in Sabirabad to store national society emergency stock for ten years free of charge. The warehouse can accommodate up to 2,000 tons of relief items. It needs to be repaired though, which is planned for November 2004. Now the national society has a warehouse in all (six) regions except Sumgayit. Consultations with the local authorities continue to identify premises there.

In the meantime, progress has been made in the procurement of an emergency stock. Through tender, the Red Crescent identified a company to provide basic relief items including mobile kitchen stoves, heaters, jerry cans, candles, hygiene sets, blankets, bed sheet and towels of CHF 64,077 for 350 families (approximately 1,750 people). Kitchen sets and cotton mattresses will be procured in October. The commodities will be distributed among regions. Each regional warehouse will have an emergency stock for 50 families (250 members).

To set up a centralised system of stock management, the Red Crescent has started training of regional coordinators on warehousing procedures including how to complete a purchase request form, requisition note and stock cards. During the reported period, such training was conducted for Red Crescent staff of Lankaran regional centre as well as local committees in Astara, Lerik and Guba. Over the coming months, more training of more people in other regions is planned.

Another, 62 Red Crescent staff and volunteers in Baku, Ganja, Sabirabad and Mingachevir were trained on how to use radio equipment to communicate with different regions during emergency and non-emergency times.

HF and VHF radio stations were installed in the Red Crescent Secretariat in Baku and Ganja regional centre. The national society now has telecommunication equipment in all six regional centres, except Baku. The Baku regional centre will be equipped in 2005. Also during the reported period, six vehicles of the Red Crescent regional centres in Sabirabad, Sumgayit, Lankaran and Mingachevir were equipped with HF and VHF radio stations (coverage 25-50 km and 350-420 km, respectively). This brings the total number of Red Crescent vehicles equipped with radios to 17.

In Nabran, a crowded beach in north-eastern part of Azerbaijan, 40 Red Crescent volunteers demonstrated first aid skills and distributed 4,270 brochures on how to prevent casualties on water. This was a part of a campaign launched by the national society with a slogan '*Azerbaijan Red Crescent guards people's health*' to reduce instances of drowning in the area. The campaign also included training of Red Cross mobile volunteer teams on where and how to set up a tent as well as HF and VHF basis radio stations in emergencies.

The best way to measure impact of the capacity building efforts is to see how effectively the Red Crescent responds to emergencies. Mobile volunteer teams in Baku and Sumgayit had an opportunity to demonstrate the importance of investing into disaster preparedness. They were among the first to offer assistance to families in Gobustan, Sabunchu and Ismaylli, whose houses had been destroyed by fire triggered by an electric short-circuit. Red Crescent offered relief items such as blankets, towels, clothes, shoes, kettle, ovens, jerry cans and detergent to help families meet their basic needs.

Remaining challenges that will be addressed by the end of 2004 include to:

- establish a training centre for Red Crescent mobile volunteer teams and a warehouse in Sumgayit;
- conduct training for mobile teams.
- procure kitchen sets and cotton mattresses for 350 families.
- train another 55 volunteers and staff in Lankaran, Baku and Nakhchivan on how to use radio equipment.

First Aid: Red Crescent first aid instructors organised 78 training sessions for 613 people, mainly schoolchildren, Red Crescent volunteers and internally displaced people in Baku, Sumgayit, Mingachavir, Ganja and Lankaran. Efforts have been also made to expand the network of Red Crescent instructors. Currently, the Red Crescent has three first aid instructors in each of the seven regional centres. During the reporting period, another 42 people were trained from local committees of Mingachavir, Ganja, Lankaran and Nakhchivan. The long-term objective is to have a first aid instructor in every Red Crescent branch. This is a priority for the national society that has committed itself, as a humanitarian organization, to protect and save lives.

The Red Crescent marked the World First Aid Day⁷ to help raise first aid awareness. The national society volunteers organised simulation exercises in Baku, Sumgayit, Shamakhi, Ismayilli, Mingachevir, Zaqatala and Sabirabad (in southern camps as well as local villages of Akhmedabad, Garatape and Bulagli) with active participation of the local communities. They demonstrated basic, life-saving techniques to offer the general public the possibility of learning more about, or refreshing, first aid knowledge and skills. Additionally, some 2,000 booklets on first aid were distributed to schoolchildren, their teachers, and just passers-by because it is the ordinary people and volunteers, often non-professionals, who mobilise themselves to provide that initial help and make the difference, on a day-to-day basis and at the scene of crisis.

In October-November 2004, the Red Crescent is planning to conduct a survey among those who have been trained in first aid, to identify how many have used their skills. By the end of this year, it will also train another 35 new first aid instructors through three sessions in Sumgayit, Baku and Sabirabad.

Mobile technical team: The focus during the reported period was on training a new mobile team in Nakhichevan on first aid techniques, safety during construction, and selection of beneficiaries. The training was attended by representatives of the local authorities too, because they take active part in the selection of beneficiaries and it is important they understand Red Crescent criteria.

The national society has five mobile teams: one is based in Nakhichvan and another four in Gernaboy, Lankaran, Ismayilli and Guba. The teams help vulnerable people living in far-flung rural areas with minor home repair. People in villages have many problems – bad roads, lack of electricity, water, heating, low salaries, poor health care and social support from the Government. The most affected are lone elderly people, who live on equivalent of 7 US dollars a month and single-mother headed families with four to seven children. Unemployment is high. Those who work receive the salary of 18-20 US dollars, which is not enough to cover even basic needs. The houses are in a dilapidated condition, as they have not been repaired for years. Cracked windows and doors do not protect its inhabitants from harsh winter winds, rains and snow. The government does not have the capacity to provide even for basic needs. Therefore, support offered by the Red Crescent mobile technical teams is welcomed, both by beneficiaries and the local authorities.

During June-September 2004, the teams repaired 371 houses: 112 in Lankaran, 119 in Guba, 116 in Ismayilli and 24 in Nakhichvan. 71 per cent of beneficiaries were lone elderly people (264), and another 29 per cent (107) of the houses belonged to large families with four to six children of 6 to 16 years old. The repair works included: fixing windows, doors and roofs, installing electricity, plastering and painting walls.

The teams mobilise local communities, mainly schoolchildren and neighbours, to help them during the work. They clean houses and a territory around after the repair works have completed, do shopping and visit elderly people regularly to keep them a company. Some 300 people volunteered to help the Red Crescent during the reported period.

Monitoring has revealed that the Red Crescent has to improve performance in logistics and reporting. Because of poor knowledge or adherence to standard procedures, procurement of construction materials is sometimes delayed slowing work of the teams. To avoid any delays in the future, the Federation delegation facilitated training for Red Crescent programme managers on standard logistics and reporting procedures. This will be followed up by on-the-job coaching.

Humanitarian values

Goal: Behaviour of people has changed to increase tolerance, non-discrimination, mutual understanding and respect for human beings.

Objective: The Azerbaijan Red Crescent has strengthened capacities to promote a culture of non-violence and non-discrimination.

⁷ World First Aid Day is a Red Cross Red Crescent initiative launched with 16 European Red Cross Societies in 2000, with events organized in the capital cities or other locations. It is planned to institutionalise the day especially under the UN auspices.

Challenging violence and discrimination: The Red Crescent has continued a series of training for volunteers so that they challenge violence and discrimination in all its forms and promote tolerance and respect for cultural diversity among other people in their communities. In June-September 2004, the Red Crescent trained 12 new volunteers from Baku, Sumgait, Ganja, Mingehcavir, Sabirabad and Lankaran. During the training, volunteers discussed the harm of stigmatisation and discrimination towards people living with HIV/AIDS, drug addicts, disabled people, lone pensioners and other marginalised groups. These volunteers returned to their communities and conducted similar sessions for another 210 people, mainly schoolchildren, local villagers and other volunteers. Many participants have admitted that they had not realised that discrimination and marginalisation were the issues in the country. Discussion had an eye-opening affect and alerted the public to the problem. It was moving to receive feedback from a teenager suffering infantile cerebral paralysis that has bound him to a wheel-chair. His relatives attended a Red Crescent organised seminar and according to the boy, their attitude to him has since changed from being detached to more compassionate.

The Red Crescent printed 2,000 posters with a message *'Let's unchain the world'*. The posters were developed based on drawings of children who participated in a Red Crescent organised competition in May 2004 on a topic *'Discrimination is unacceptable'*. The posters have been distributed through national society branches.

In November 2004, the Federation together with the ICRC is planning to hold a meeting with Red Crescent dissemination officers, as well as youth and humanitarian values programme managers to discuss how to improve volunteers' work to promote culture of non-violence and non-discrimination more effectively.

Improving the image of the Red Crescent: A number of articles have been published in local newspapers on Red Crescent work including public campaigns on the World Blood Donor Day; Red Crescent organised summer camps for disabled children and celebrations of World First Aid Day. Community development efforts (see below under the organisational development programme) of the national society were covered by a local TV channel *Lider*.

Red Crescent volunteers visited 38 private medical institutions and drug stores to discuss the misuse of the Red Crescent emblem. This was part of a campaign dedicated to the 55th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions⁸. To increase the visibility of the Red Crescent and its work, the national society also arranged for the production of 100 flags and 140 stickers with the Red Crescent emblem. Flags and stickers will be distributed to regional branches, local committees and primary organisations (community groups linked to the Red Crescent).

Organisational Development

Goal: The Azerbaijan Red Crescent has positioned itself as an effective partner to vulnerable communities supporting them to confront their challenges.

Objective: The Azerbaijan Red Crescent is a better functioning national society providing assistance with greater impact and relevance to vulnerable communities.

Programme planning and management skills development: The national society has finalised its strategic plan for 2005-2007. The plan was developed with participation of all Red Crescent departments and programme managers. The process was coordinated by a working group comprising Red Crescent executive secretary and his two deputies, as well as national society vice-president and head of dissemination sector. Federation programme coordinator and information/reporting officer were also members of the group. Technical support was provided from the Federation's regional delegation in Ankara. Consultations were held at all levels of the organisation. Regional centres, local committees and volunteers were involved too. As an initial step a mission, vision and the overall goal of the plan were formulated. The mission of the Azerbaijan Red Crescent is 'is to serve vulnerable people by mobilizing the capacity of Azerbaijan Red crescent and the power of humanity'. The vision is 'to make Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society a strong organization helping vulnerable people on national and international levels'. Its overall goal is to strengthen the capacity of the Azerbaijan Red Crescent to carry out efficient and sustainable activities at central and local levels.

⁸ The rules on the use of the Red Cross Red Crescent emblems are defined in international law under the Geneva Conventions of 1949. To read more on emblems: <<http://www.ifrc.org/who/emblem.asp>>

The plan identifies the following strategic priorities for the national society over the coming two years:

- establish a disaster management system to prepare for and respond to disasters.
- increase health awareness of the population through promotion and education work.
- endeavour to change behaviour of people to increase tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for human being by disseminating humanitarian values and the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement⁹.
- establish a stable and diverse financial resource base of the Azerbaijan Red Crescent.
- strengthen the capacity of national society local branches to provide relevant and effective services.
- develop a system to improve involvement, registration and management of youth and volunteers.

The plan will be reviewed at the General Assembly due to be convened in November 2004.

In the meantime, Red Crescent branches have been exploring possibilities to strengthen their self-sustainability. They seek local partnerships; some successfully. The Khojali Branch in Baku, for example, established contacts with the Norwegian Embassy in Azerbaijan and with their support organised a summer camp for children from vulnerable families.

As part of the drive to reduce dependency on international funding, the national society concentrates on expanding the number of primary organisations (community groups linked to the Red Crescent) and members, both of which are income sources. Since June 2004, 23 new primary organisations were established in local hospitals, polyclinics, secondary schools, municipalities, and a private company. This brings the total number of such organisations in Azerbaijan to 3,597. The Red Crescent also enlisted 19,275 new members. It has now some 190,280 members countrywide.

Through membership fees and other fundraising efforts (including funds collected through charity donation boxes and small income generation projects – see branch development project below), the Red Crescent raised CHF 14,415 during June-September 2004. This is four per cent more of the amount collected during the same period in 2003.

Branch development: The reporting period was marked with an increased involvement of Red Crescent branches with communities in their regions. Encouraged by Red Crescent volunteers, people in targeted villages and towns have grouped themselves in various social, sport and art circles to learn how to sew, draw, dance, and play a musical instrument or chess. Others formed football, volleyball and tennis teams. A number of sport competitions were held too.

The Sumgait branch organised a summer camp for 40 orphans. Camp curriculum included training sessions on first aid, health promotion, the Movement's Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values. A number of tournaments on the history and work of the Red Crescent were also held. The Mingechavir branch took 40 children to a mountain trip. In Istisu village, Red Crescent volunteers mobilised the local youth (27 people) to offer social support to lone elderly people. The youth were organised in three mobile teams to visit 52 lone pensioners on a regular basis. During these visits, volunteers have been cleaning houses of the elderly, doing shopping, cutting firewood and cooking. On another occasion, encouraged by Red Crescent branch volunteers, villagers cleaned a local riverside. During the meeting of a local community initiative group, villagers in Istisu also decided to set up a community fund to respond to community needs. A committee of three was elected from among villagers to monitor spending. First contributions have started to arrive.

In Shamakhi and Ismayilli, the local population helped repair premises for a community centre. The centre will be a meeting place of the local population. Community training on first aid, health prevention and disaster preparedness will also be held there. A total of five such centres have been established within the current project: two in Shamakhi and Ismayilli, and another three in Sumgayit, Mingachevir and Ujar, one centre in each. Local villagers also helped to make furniture for the centres.

⁹ Proclaimed in Vienna in 1965, the seven Fundamental Principles bond together the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. They guarantee the continuity of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and its humanitarian work.

Ten Red Crescent health promoters from Alchali and Istisu villages in Ismayilli region conducted sessions on immunization, intestinal infection, hygiene and nutrition for 32 women, children and elderly people. Another 79 people were trained by health promoters in Ujar and Mingachevir. Five Red Crescent first aid trainers in Sumgayit trained 41 people, including students, from their communities. Another, 73 people were trained on first aid in Mingachevir (21) and Zagatala (52).

Such activities help build trust between the national society and the communities the Red Crescent springs from. People see that the Red Crescent is truly their national society which is there for them and with them. The community perception of the organisation is changing too. The Red Crescent is not regarded any more solely as a relief agency responding to emergencies. It is part of the community supporting people to prevent and alleviate suffering every day.

The image of the national society has been steadily improving over the last few months. Largely because of stronger links with local communities, as explained above, but also because of the efforts made by the Red Crescent to profile its work through media. A number of TV reports on the national society work with the communities have been shot and aired on a local television. Additionally, 6,000 booklets on Red Crescent community development work were printed; 2,345 of these were distributed among the local population, government authorities and other partners, including international humanitarian organisations such as *Youth Anti-Drug*, *World Vision* and *International Relief Development* as well as local non-governmental organisations, such as BUTA, who regularly seconds consultants to offer technical expertise to the national society. Another 6,000 booklets on the general work of the Red Crescent branches as well as 1,500 posters on first aid, health and participatory community development initiatives of the national society will be printed in October 2004.

In parallel, Red Crescent branch volunteers held sessions on Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and its Fundamental Principles for 92 people in Sumgayit, Shamakhi, Ismayilli, Ujar, Zagatala and Mingachevir. Additionally, a Red Crescent youth coordinator in Ismayilli together with Red Crescent youth department representatives from Baku held training for 18 branch volunteers according to a module developed recently by the youth department to introduce all new Red Crescent staff and volunteers to the national society, its history, mandate, work and principles that guide it.

Cooperation with local authorities has been improving too. Throughout the project period authorities have showed their support to Red Crescent initiatives. The most recent example is from Mingechavir where the government allocated an office space of 84 m² to accommodate the Red Crescent branch and an internet club.

In tandem, efforts have continued to strengthen the programme management capacity of Azerbaijan Red Crescent staff in two regional centres and six branches, targeted by the current project. The branches were assisted to install a volunteer registration system to enable the national society to manage its volunteers more effectively. Further support came through a visit of a Red Crescent project coordinator from Baku, who met with community group leaders in every village where the participatory community development approach is piloted and offered his technical expertise on the overall project management.

The management capacity varies from one branch to another. Ismaili, Sumgayit and Zagatala branches have been improving consistently. Good management there has been demonstrated in active engagement with the local communities, volunteers and local authorities. Financial and narrative reports from these regions have been improving too. Others have yet to demonstrate any change. The weakest has been Mingechavir. Branch leadership there has been passive. To help it advance, the Red Crescent will support a trip of a consultant from a more successful Ismaili branch. This trip, it is hoped, will facilitate knowledge and experience sharing between the two branches and motivate Red Crescent staff to be more active.

There have been setbacks in other areas too. The project has stopped in two of the targeted communities – in Alchali and Zagatala. The reasons vary. In Alchali, people (internally displaced families from Nagorno-Karabakh), with whom the Red Crescent has been working, were resettled to other regions. In Zagatala, the communities showed reluctance to cooperate with the national society resorting to a lack of time and willingness to deal with community issues. The Red Crescent branch there has started identifying another community to work with.

Constraints have also been experienced in generating income from small-scale projects initiated by Red Crescent branches in Ujar and Mingechavir. An incubator in Ujar suffered financial losses. In Mingechavir, commercial classes have not yet brought any dividends either; the Red Crescent centre there is more popular with young people who cannot afford to pay. The reason is largely a poor management by the national society branch. The issue has been discussed internally and the branch's plan for the centre was revised. A number of other measures have also been taken that are hoped will remedy the situation; impact remains to be seen.

Community Development: Women committees that were established with the encouragement of Red Crescent volunteers earlier this year in Akhmedabad, Bulagli and Garatape villages in the Sabirabad region, have been meeting regularly to discuss problems in their communities and agree on plans to address pressing needs. In Bulagli, for instance, women have decided to launch an income generation initiative to assist most vulnerable members in their village. So they have started sewing dresses for sale. The committees also mobilised their neighbours and initiated cleaning of the streets. They have regularly visited home-bound lone elderly people to help clean houses and offer moral support.

Women committees play an important role in coordinating distribution of various relief supplies from the Red Crescent's existing stocks or donations from various organisations, to the most in-need people. During the reported period, the committees in the IDP camps helped the Red Crescent deliver baby sets donated by the Swedish Red Cross to 81 pregnant women. The increased involvement of women in community work indicates that they start to believe in their own capacities. They have more confidence that if they try they can succeed. This is an important achievement for the society, which has been a passive recipient of aid for many years.

Training courses, the Red Crescent is running, are also important, because people learn new skills to broaden their opportunities to find work, earn money and sustain themselves and their families without external support. During the reported period, 24 internally displaced people living in the camps completed a six-month training course on sewing and hairdressing and another 22 joined. Currently, the Red Crescent is running six-month courses varying from hairdressing and barbershops to sewing and weaving for 63 people. Training is facilitated by volunteers. Many trainers are former students.

Every year, the Red Crescent organises a summer camp on the sea side for children from deprived families to enable them escape a grey daily routine, have some rest and fun, meet other children and learn something new. This year, the national society offered this opportunity to 100 internally displaced children from Nagorno-Karabakh. Days spent in the summer camp with Red Crescent volunteers will probably stay in the memory of these children for a long time, because they were different from their every day life in mud-brick houses that poorly protect them from cold desert winds and dust. The single dream these children nurture is that one day they will return home, their parents had to leave more than a decade ago, and be happy again.

Supporting children has been an important aspect of the Red Crescent work. Different competitions, such as football, boxing and chess tournaments, were organized with the participation of 68 schoolchildren in IDP camps and three local communities in Sabirabad. Winners were provided with gifts. The aim of the competitions was to provide children with a meaningful pastime, encourage them to take part in out-of-school activities and prevent developing harmful habits.

On the International Children's Day, children attending drama and folklore classes, put on a performance for their friends. To encourage young artists, Red Crescent gave them some gifts. Celebrations were held on a couple of other occasions too, including the World First Aid day and the Day of Knowledge, and included singing, dancing, and demonstration of first aid skills as well as sport techniques by Red Crescent and community volunteers. The Red Crescent has also continued supporting volunteers in organising puppet shows for children in the camps. The shows deliver an important message on health related issues such as personal hygiene and prevention of malaria and infectious diseases. There are six groups at the moment organising shows two or three times a month, but more volunteers are interested to take part. This year, the Red Crescent trained another 70. Children were shown how to make puppets and how to conduct shows. They were formed into groups and started working with their communities.

Youth development: Regional branches have continued collecting information about their volunteers and forwarding them to the Secretariat in Baku to create a centralized electronic data-base of Red Crescent volunteers

that can be accessed by all branches. To date, 442 volunteers from six regions have been registered. The system will help the Red Crescent have a clearer picture of the number and profile of its volunteers. It will also enable the organisation to determine in which areas its volunteers need support to strengthen their skills and professionalism.

757 new volunteers were trained according to the new training module developed by the Red Crescent earlier this year to systematise the capacity building work with its volunteers. The module includes various topics, such as the history and activities of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and its three components, the seven Fundamental Principles and volunteer work, as well as brief information about the Red Crescent's work in community-based health, first aid, HIV/AIDS, tracing, disaster preparedness and international relations. The training was conducted according to an interactive methodology and is based on fun – it has many icebreakers and group-work sessions. Such methodology has not been practiced by the national society until recently and has been successful. Red Crescent regional youth coordinators were also trained to strengthen their leadership, communication and planning skills.

The Red Crescent is encouraging its volunteers to take an active part in the work of the national society and initiate new activities to help people in need. 42 volunteers in Lankaran and Ganja have started visiting 100 orphans and disabled children to help do homework, so that they can catch up with their classmates. Volunteers also teach them how to look after themselves independently, play different games, draw pictures, knit and read books. Another 30 volunteers have been working with orphans and disabled children in Shagan and Sumgait. In Lankaran, they have organised a football competition and a quiz on general knowledge. Handicrafts of disabled children were exhibited for the public. 40 children were presented with school supplies.

170 disabled children from the Shagan orphanage were supported to participate in a summer camp. Children were accompanied by eight volunteers from the Azerbaijan Red Crescent and 12 volunteers from the Norwegian Red Cross. Volunteers played with children, taught them swimming, drawing, and knitting.

To help volunteers improve their skills and offer better support to children they are working with, the Azerbaijan Red Crescent organised for them a trip to Norway to learn from similar experience of Norwegian Red Cross colleagues.

Also under the youth development project, a youth club was opened in Sumgait. The club will be a meeting point of young people to share ideas, experiences and better coordinate their work. It is planned to establish such clubs in each region. In Ganja and Mingeçavir, premises have been identified and repair works have started.

The project supported printing of 2,100 copies of a monthly bulletin, which highlights interesting initiatives of Red Crescent volunteers. The bulletin serves as a communication tool to help volunteers in different regions learn about each other. 470 copies of the guidelines for youth were printed too. The guidelines were developed during the first half of the year. They define who can be a volunteer, what it means to be a volunteer, which programmes volunteer can participate in and how they should communicate/act in various situations.

Regional youth volunteer boards have been meeting regularly to discuss progress, constraints and future plans.